



PRINCE HOME

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My Experience *By: Lara Gordan*



I was living in Sauk Village, IL and was working at UPS. One day at work I broke my wrist and was out of work for 2 years. Within that 2 year span of time I lost my house from being unemployed. When I finally was released to return to work, UPS fired me. After being fired I began working with a representative from my

local IDES office to find employment. One day after explaining I was going to be homeless if I didn't find employment soon; the IDES representative recommended the Prince Home which was a homeless program for veterans. I telephoned the Prince Home and spoke with Rosemary Irons-Lewis to find out more about the program requirements for admissions. While on the telephone I explained to Rosemary I had to find a place to stay immediately because my home was going into foreclosure. The following day I drove down to the Prince Home and filled out an application. I was admitted to the Prince Home on June 4, 2015. After arriving to the Prince Home, one of the amenities I wasn't fond of was individual counseling. Initially, I felt I didn't have any mental health problems that needed addressing. My main focus was securing employment so I could find an apartment and get back out into society. I was compliant with the requirements and started looking for employment after the orientation period. I was searching for housing, volunteering my time to a worthy organization, exploring employment options and attending all therapeutic groups. However, I still felt I didn't have any mental health problems. Finally I found a job at River Valley Metro Bus Company. I returned to what was familiar to me, which was being a workaholic so that I wouldn't have to deal with any issues dealing with my mental health problems. In late October I was forced to face my

problems head on. I had an accident with one of the buses. Unfortunately, due to my accident I lost my job at the bus company. I no longer could hide behind working long hours so I wouldn't have to attend programming that would make me deal with the mental health issues I was trying to avoid. I decided at this time to finally give the treatment a chance. I broke down and started talking about my feelings and everything painful I had endured throughout my life span. I came to realize I had been through a lot of traumatic events my entire life. I began to realize if I wanted a healthy new beginning I had to deal with my life stressors. I learned new coping skills like journaling, tapping and meditation. I learned to open up and talk with my counselor (Rosemary Irons-Lewis) about anything. I started to realize all I had been through I never gave up on me and that I was resilient and a survivor. This helped to build my self-confidence and I began searching for a job with a renewed purpose. I searched for employment on a daily basis and finally I got the break I was looking for. Alfred Hollis, the staff member at Prince that handles employment, posted a support service worker job at Shapiro Developmental Center in Kankakee. I traveled to Chicago and took the exam for the position. I was granted an interview and a short time later was hired at Shapiro Developmental Center as a Support Service Worker. My hard work had finally paid off. This afforded me the opportunity to save enough money to get an apartment and begin to transition back into society. I moved out of the Prince Home on January 18, 2016 into my own apartment. And I am happy to announce that in November I got married and in January I became a homeowner when I purchased a condominium in the Kankakee area. All of this wouldn't have been possible without the hard work and persistence of the staff at the Prince Home. I will forever be grateful for the assistance they provided me.

If you would like to find out more about Prince contact the home at (815) 468-6581 Extension 213 and ask for Mr. Lewis.

Thanksgiving Dinner

The residents at Prince Home were treated to a Thanksgiving Dinner with all of the trimmings thanks to the Walker Family from Grant Park, IL. Scott, Kathy, and a few members of their family cooked everything and spent most of their Thanksgiving Holiday fellowshiping with the residents of Prince Home. As you can tell by the pictures, a fun time was had by all. The residents really appreciated the generosity that was shown by the Walkers on Thanksgiving.



Disabled Veterans Group Golfing Benefit



On September 12, 2016 The Disabled Veterans Group Golfing Benefit was held. The proceeds from the Benefit goes directly to help programs that service disabled veterans throughout the state. The group visited Prince Home on December 19, 2016 to present Lester Robertson, Administrator of the Manteno Veterans Home and Wali Lewis, Program Supervisor of the Prince Home, with a check for \$1000. This is just one of many donations Prince Home receives throughout the holiday season. Below you will find a list of organizations that generously gave to Prince Home during the holiday season.

Church Youth Group visits the Prince Home

The Saints Worshipping and Glorifying God Youth Group (S.W.A.G.G.) from Moring Star Missionary Baptist Church in Kankakee, IL visited the Prince Home to have some fun and fellowship with the residents. S.W.A.G.G. leaders expressed that the youth had a great time playing games and talking with the veterans. They have already expressed interest in returning in the spring.



Army Chief of Staff's wife visits Prince Home



(L – R) Wali Lewis-Prince Home Supervisor, Danel Peters-Prince Home Administrative Assistant, Harry Sawyer-IDVA Assistant Director, Lester Robertson-Prince Home Director, Hollyanne Miley-Wife of the U.S. Army Chief of Staff Four Star General Mark Wiley, Rosemary Irons-Lewis - Prince Home's Rehab Counselor.

Mrs. HollyAnne Miley, the wife of U.S. Army Chief of Staff Four Star General Mark Wiley, and her staff visited the Prince Home. Mrs. Wiley was given a tour of the facility, met with the Prince Home Administration and staff and with the residents of the home. Mrs. Wiley stated how impressed she was with the Prince Home Program and looked forward to visiting our home again. The residents thanked Mrs. Miley and expressed their appreciation for a high ranking official to take the time to visit the Prince Home.

Wish List

The Prince Home attempts to provide an array of personal care items as a means for our veterans to regain and maintain dignity, and as a necessity for those who, in finding their way to an independent and productive life, are employed or are seeking employment.

Your gifts bring added relief from the struggles and social indignities that many who come to our door must struggle with on a daily basis.

- Gift cards (Walmart, Berkots, etc.)
- New bedding (bag twin)
- Suits for interviews
- Pop
- Bottled water
- New dishes
- Toiletries (toothpaste, deodorant, body wash, etc.)
- Stamps (forever stamps book)
- Tickets to events (basketball, baseball, concerts, etc.)
- Sponsored food events (dinners, lunches, etc.)
- DVD's

Thank you for your consideration of these items.

We will be happy to provide you with a tax-deductible receipt for your donation.

Please call with any questions or to schedule a delivery 815-468-6581 x214

Cubs Scouts Pizza Party

The Monee Cub Scout Pack #125 came to donate toiletries and hygiene products to veterans on November 20, 2016. They also brought pizza and beverages to share with the residents. The scouts and their leaders played games and hung out with the residents. The residents and the scouts had a ball!



Adopt A Soldier Rewards A Resident With A Car



Adopt A Soldier rewarded a resident that was graduating the program with a car! Ovide Gigliello was surprised when Sue Wackerlin walked in the door and showed him a picture of his 2002 Chevy Tracker! Adopt A Soldier has been a great supporter of Prince Home and has vowed to keep doing things like this for residents that graduate the program.

Representatives from Adopt-A-Soldier present Ovide Gigliello (holding the picture) with a 2002 Chevy Tracker

Thank you!

Prince Home's residents and staff would like to thank all of the countless community organizations that continue to show their support of Prince through their food, clothing, and monetary donations. It is greatly appreciated!

The Prince Home at Manteno is a program for homeless and disabled veterans co-located with the Veterans' Home in Manteno, Illinois. The Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs Prince Home at Manteno is a residential program for homeless and disabled Veterans. The facility is wheelchair assessable, and provides residential housing for eligible male and female Veterans.. Our Staff is proficient in addressing a multitude of challenges including but not limited to, homelessness, PTSD, sobriety, self-esteem, and hopelessness.

The Prince Home is located in rural Manteno, Illinois, just 40 miles south of Chicago.
It shares grounds with the Illinois Veterans' Home at Manteno.



Illinois Department of
Veterans' Affairs

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